



Observer Coverage Fact Sheet

All Category I and II fishery participants must carry an observer on fishing trips as follows:

- When requested to do so by NMFS or a designated observer contractor
- Usual lead time is 48 hours ahead of observer coming aboard
- Vessels carrying observers must comply with US Coast Guard Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety requirements
- NMFS may request Category III fishery participants voluntarily carry an observer



As a fishery participant, your cooperation is important to help NMFS collect the most complete, unbiased, and relevant data possible. Good data prevents over-regulation and ensures the sustainability of our fisheries and the conservation of protected species populations.



Observed Fisheries in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea

<u>Category I</u>	<u>Category II</u>	<u>Category III</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northeast sink gillnet • Mid-Atlantic gillnet • Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico and HMS large pelagics longline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Carolina inshore gillnet • Northeast anchored float gillnet • Northeast drift gillnet • Southeast Atlantic gillnet • Southeastern US Atlantic shark gillnet • Mid-Atlantic bottom trawl • Northeast mid-water trawl (including pair trawl) • Northeast bottom trawl • Mid-Atlantic haul/beach seine • Virginia pound net • Mid-Atlantic mid-water trawl (including pair trawl) • Mid-Atlantic Flynet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeastern US Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico shark bottom longline * • Southeastern US Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico shrimp trawl <p>* Observer coverage in this fishery is mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act</p> 

For a complete list of ALL Category I, II and III fisheries, visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/interactions/lof>



About Carrying Observers

Commercial fishermen and fishing industry representatives will be given advance notification, when possible, that observer coverage will be required. Fishermen selected for observer coverage may be notified by letter, phone or in person by NMFS personnel, designated contractors or observers.

If selected to carry an observer, a vessel may not engage in any Category I or II fishing operation unless an observer is on board.

Fishermen must ensure observer access, accommodation, information and safety:

- All vessel areas made accessible to the observer
- Communications and navigation equipment made available for observer use (if the vessel is equipped)
- Vessel location provided to the observer to the nearest minute of latitude and longitude, or exact Ioran coordinates
- Samples, retention and storage for specimens of marine mammals, protected species, target fish and bycatch made available (to the extent feasible)
- Notification to the observer of commercial fishing operations start and end times
- Food and accommodations for the observer equivalent to that of the crew
- Safe embarkation, disembarkation and transfer of the observer at sea via small boat or raft during daylight hours as weather and sea conditions allow and with the observer's agreement
- Compliance with other NMFS guidelines or regulations developed to ensure effective deployment and use of observers



Fishermen must ensure vessel safety while observers are on board:

- Comply with United States Coast Guard (USCG) safety requirements while at sea
- Hold a current USCG Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Examination decal: decals are valid for two years from successful completion of a dockside safety exam given by a CFVS examiner. For more information, contact the nearest USCG Captain of the Port
- Allow an observer, NMFS personnel or designated observer service provider to visually inspect any safety or accommodation requirement on request (50 CFR 600.746(c)(2))

Note: Vessels without a current safety decal are considered unsafe to carry an observer. Vessels required and selected to carry an observer but which are considered unsafe are prohibited from fishing without observer coverage (50 CFR 600.746(f))



For more information or questions about NMFS' observer coverage, contact Stacey Horstman at 727-824-5312 or Stacey.Horstman@noaa.gov